

## DIH InnovaMare Innovation Competition

### SAVE THE DATE and CALL FOR TEAMS

Activity 4.2 – ITHR0200416 DIH InnovaMare Project (Interreg VI-A Italy-Croatia)

The "DIH InnovaMare Innovation Competition" is a **high-intensity contest** designed for innovators and researchers to **identify and develop innovative project** proposals focused on the **Blue Economy**.

#### Key Event Details

<b>Date &amp; Time</b>	Thursday, February 26, 2026 from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM (CET)
<b>Location</b>	<a href="#">Business Center, Marghera-Venice</a> (hybrid format)
<b>Target Teams</b>	Blue Innovators: SMEs, Start-ups, Researchers, Graduate Students
<b>Team Size</b>	Minimum 3, Maximum 5 people
<b>Prize</b>	€1000 for the winning team & wide promotion via DIH InnovaMare network

#### Challenges: areas for innovation

The event drives the conversion of **cross-border challenges** (identified in Activity 4.1) into fundable, market-ready concepts. **Teams must develop their solutions by addressing** one or more of **the challenges identified**. These challenges span critical sectors of the Blue Economy:

1. Sensor Suite Design for Monitoring Regenerative IMTA Systems in the Adriatic Sea (Blue Biotechnology)
2. Marine litter in coastal areas - finding an innovative and eco-friendly solution (Maritime transportation)
3. Insufficient port infrastructure that can support ships in reducing pollution while docked (Maritime Transportation & Coastal Infrastructure)
4. Efficient Autonomous Underwater Monitoring for Marine Ecosystem Protection and Port Infrastructure Safety (Maritime Transportation)
5. Poor waste management practices for tracking and recycling system for fishing gear and fish processing byproducts (Fisheries and Aquaculture)
6. Marine pollution - liquid and solid waste in nautics (Maritime transportation)
7. Inefficient waste management in the fish processing industry (Fisheries and Aquaculture)
8. Lack of ability of dynamical validation of efficiency measures, fuel savings, emissions reductions in the Adriatic Sea (Maritime transportation)



9. Operational and Maintenance Inefficiencies Across the Maritime Lifecycle: From Shipbuilding to Fleet Management (Maritime Defence, Security, and Surveillance)
10. Real-time hydrographic and meteorological data integration (Maritime transportation)
11. Integration between rail transport and port logistics (Research and Infrastructure, Other: Last Mile Railway)
12. Lack of underwater data transmission technologies - expanding the range of sources for multi-source environmental data acquisition and processing platforms (Research and Infrastructure)
13. Seabream predation and climate change weather extremes in mussel and oyster production systems (Fisheries and Aquaculture)
14. Poor integration between railway infrastructure and ports, especially in the Last Mile segment (Research and Infrastructure, Other: Last Mile Railway)
15. Lack of integrated visitor data for tourism planning (Tourism and Recreation)
16. Insufficient legacy onboard sensors (Other: Sensor for sea data acquisition)
17. High maritime traffic congestion during peak tourism seasons (Maritime Transportation & Coastal Infrastructure)
18. Legal aspects of autonomous surface vessels (Maritime Transportation)
19. Digitalization & sustainability in maritime transport (Maritime Transportation)
20. Energy supply from renewable sources in Croatia (Other: Port Authority, Maritime Transportation)

## The Innovation Competition

The Innovation Competition is structured to provide high-intensity knowledge exposure, forcing teams to address the 7 essential elements of project maturity required for a successful Blue Economy project.

The competition is a fast-paced learning and development process that takes place over two main phases:

### **Phase 1: Preparation and pitch (9:00 AM – 1:00 PM)**

Teams must connect to the provided project link at 9:00 AM on February 26, 2026, and will be tasked with completing a Business Model Canvas. During the first phase, each group must deliver a 10-minute pitch to the Jury. It is essential for teams to have a good internet connection.

- **In-Person Bonus:** Teams receive +2 points towards their score if one person attends in person at the Marghera Business Center.

### **Phase 2: The blue economy contest (Starting 2:30 PM)**

The core competition begins, focusing on the rapid formulation of ideas around project maturity elements. The process is intense: an expert player will give a 5-minute explanation on



a specific topic, after which teams have 10 minutes to complete a structured digital format in Padlet to answer questions related to that topic.

This rapid-fire contest will cover **7 essential topics**:

1. Market description
2. Innovation in Blue Economy
3. Communication and reputation
4. TRL (Technology Readiness Level) and Legal Structure
5. Business Plan
6. Reference Partners (Industrial, Technical, Institutional, Market)
7. Team competences

The **final agenda** and the **Jury composition** will be released when the **event registration will be opened**, at the **beginning of January 2026**.

The Jury will evaluate the responses, and the winning team will be awarded the €1000 prize, as well as a wide promotion through the DIH InnovaMare network.

### Who Should Participate?

We are seeking **diverse teams composed of innovators** from the blue economy and marine technology sectors, **research institutions**, and **academia**. **Teams** must be made up of a **minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 people**.

- **Cross-border team bonus:** Teams receive +2 points towards their score if the team is composed of at least 1 person of different nationality with respect to the rest of the team (e.g. a Croatian member in an Italian team).

Your participation directly contributes to the project's goal of developing innovative solution concepts and co-created project concepts for marine technologies. Our target is to have at least 15 applicant teams and facilitate the development of 15 innovative solution concepts.

### Access to Funding and Next Steps

This competition is organized in **cooperation with key financial institutions**. This provides a direct channel for participants to showcase their concepts to potential investors.

The goal is **not just to win the prize**, but to **create viable project concepts**. The successful innovative solution concepts developed here will proceed directly to the next project activity (4.3): *The co-creation workshops for the development of new project concepts for different EU funding opportunities*.

